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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Preparation for International	)	ET Docket 93-198
Telecommunication Union World	)	
Radiocommunication Conferences	)	

93-198

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REPLY COMMENTS OF
COMSAT MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS

I. Introduction

COMSAT Mobile Communications (CMC), a business unit of COMSAT Corporation, submits this reply to the comments filed in response to the Commission's Notice of Inquiry (NOI) in ET Docket No. 93-198, regarding preparations for the 1993 International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-93).

As the Commission noted in the NOI, the ITU Council specifically recommended that two issues be addressed at WRC-95: (1) facilitating the use of the Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) bands that were allocated at the 1992 World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC-92), and (2) consideration of the Report of the Voluntary Group of Experts (VGE).[1] The overwhelming majority of comments submitted in response to the Commission's NOI discussed issues related to MSS and associated spectrum and regulatory

[1] See NOI at 2-3.

issues, while few addressed the Report of the VGE.[2] The concerns expressed in these comments lend support to CMC's contention that the United States should advocate at WRC-93 a narrow and manageable agenda for WRC-95 focusing primarily on MSS issues.[3] Specifically, CMC urges the United States to support the early availability of the 2 GHz bands allocated at WARC-92 for global MSS, as well as the adoption of provisional measures at WRC-93 to permit frequency coordination to begin immediately in these bands. Because Inmarsat and other potential future users of these bands need to make significant design and procurement decisions prior to 1995 if global MSS 2 GHz systems are to be introduced by the end of the decade, WRC-93 presents a critical opportunity to adopt provisional arrangements that will allow the development of these systems to proceed.

II. MSS Issues

The comments filed in this proceeding propose a number of MSS-related issues to be considered for the WRC-95 agenda concerning ways to facilitate the use of the new MSS bands allocated at WARC-92 including the global MSS 2 GHz bands and the 1.6/2.5 GHz (RDSS) bands. Comments from potential providers of

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[2] In response to the comments of the Utilities Telecommunications Council and the Wireless Cable Association International, Inc., CMC notes that the issues raised in those comments are already being addressed in domestic proceedings before the Commission, and are not appropriate agenda items for the upcoming WRCs.

[3] See also Comments of AMSC Subsidiary Corporation and

MSS including Constellation, Loral Qualcomm and Motorola, support CMC's contention that a primary objective of WRC-93/95 should be to ensure that the global MSS allocations at 2 GHz are made available at the earliest possible date (earlier than the date indicated in Footnote 746B, i.e., year 2005).[4] Although WRC-95 will be the next Conference competent to amend the Radio Regulations (RR) to advance the implementation date for the worldwide availability of the MSS bands, CMC continues to view WRC-93 as the critical opportunity to adopt provisional arrangements that will permit the design and development of MSS systems to proceed.[5]

Because decisions on future spacecraft design and launch vehicles must be made by Inmarsat and other service providers prior to 1995 in order to be in service by 2000, it is imperative that the U.S. advocate the adoption of provisional arrangements

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[4] See Comments of Constellation Communications, Inc. at 1; Comments of Loral Qualcomm Satellite Services, Inc. (Loral Qualcomm) at 7-10; Comments of Motorola, Inc. at 5, 8.

[5] Comments from the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) applicants also recommended for consideration at WRC-95 regulatory issues associated with sharing constraints imposed on the 1610-1626.5 MHz and 2483.5-2500 MHz bands including the uplink E.I.R.P. density limits stipulated in Footnote 731E and the need for relaxation of the current P.F.D. coordination thresholds that are associated with the downlink bands. While CMC recognizes that these are valid concerns that need to be addressed, CMC submits that supporting technical studies from the Radiocommunication Sector are necessary before these issues can be resolved at a WRC. Thus, unlike the provisional arrangements proposed by CMC for allowing frequency coordination in the 2 GHz bands, which is an administrative matter for WRC-93, the technical/regulatory issues associated with the RDSS bands cannot be considered in a meaningful way without supporting technical studies prior to WRC-95.

at WRC-93 to permit Administrations to begin the frequency coordination process for the 2 GHz bands allocated for global MSS. As several applicants for Low Earth Orbit (LEO) MSS systems noted, the long lead-times associated with the development and construction of (second-generation) global MSS systems require that decisions on the availability of this spectrum be made as early as possible to allow development of these systems to proceed.[6] In addition, AMSC also expects that the 2 GHz bands will be used for MSS satellite-based PCS.[7] Because existing and future developers of systems in these bands need assurances that this spectrum will be available, CMC urges the Commission to support the adoption at WRC-93 of CMC's proposed Resolution (Attachment I to CMC's initial comments) or some other interim measure to permit coordination of 2 GHz MSS systems to proceed, pending action at WRC-95 to modify Footnote 746B to provide an implementation date prior to the year 2000.

The comments submitted in this proceeding also support the Commission's suggestion in its NOI that issues associated with MSS feeder-links be considered at the upcoming WRCs.[8] A number of commenters noted the critical importance of satellite feeder-links to global MSS systems and recommended that feeder-link

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[6] See Comments of Loral Qualcomm at 9-10; Comments of Motorola, Inc. at 9; Comments of TRW, Inc. at 4.

[7] See Comments of AMSC at 8.

[8] See NOI at 5.

issues be included on the agenda at WRC-95.[9] For many commenters, the essence of this issue concerns RR 2613 and the need to coordinate LEO/MSS feeder-links with GSO/FSS systems using the same frequency bands.[10]

CMC agrees with these commenters that MSS feeder-links should be addressed at the upcoming WRC Conference, but believes that technical studies must be completed on an urgent basis -- whether for GSO or non-GSO MSS systems -- to permit resolution of these issues at WRC-95. In our initial comments, CMC asserted that to reach solutions to these feeder-link issues, they must be considered by the 1993 Radiocommunication Assembly (rather than by WRC-93).[11] We explained that consideration by the Assembly is necessary in order to conclude the technical work already underway by the Radiocommunication Sector, as well as to initiate any new technical studies necessary to resolve these feeder-link issues at WRC-95. Motorola, in contrast, asserted in its comments that, because the technical and operational studies will not have been completed in time for WRC-95, consideration of MSS feeder-links should be delayed until WRC-97 or later.[12] CMC submits that, contrary to Motorola's assertion, it is possible to

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[9] See, e.g., Comments of Constellation Communications, Inc. at 2; Comments of International Small Satellite Organization at 3; Comments of Loral Qualcomm at 6-7; Comments of TRW, Inc. at 7-9.

[10] See e.g., Comments of Loral Qualcomm at 6-7; Comments of TRW, Inc. at 7-9.

[11] See Comments of CMC at 10-12.

[12] See Comments of Motorola, Inc. at 6 n.7.

complete the appropriate studies in time for WRC-95 to resolve coordination issues between MSS feeder-link bands shared with FSS or to identify alternative bands for MSS feeder-links. However, as noted above, this will require that priority be given to feeder-links studies within the appropriate Study Groups and that the Radiocommunication Assemblies treat this as an urgent matter in both November, 1993 and in 1995 prior to WRC-95.

Aside from the issues discussed above concerning the early availability of the MSS spectrum, and MSS feeder-links, CMC believes that it is premature for the United States to determine at this time which of the many MSS-related issues raised in the comments should be included under the WRC-95 agenda item on facilitating the use of the MSS bands. Commenters offered many proposals aimed at "cleaning up" the MSS bands and making them more usable, including, e.g., proposals to convert all MSS spectrum into global allocations,[13] to delete Footnote 731E to ensure the primary status of MSS in the 1610-1626.5 MHz bands,[14] and to allocate additional spectrum to LEO systems operating below 1 GHz.[15]

With respect to these proposals, CMC submits that it is not necessary to have a separate agenda item for each of these technical issues and that such an approach would be an

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[13] See Comments of Motorola, Inc. at 5.

[14] See Comments of Loral Qualcomm at 13-16.

[15] See Comments of Orbital Communications Corporation at 4-5; Comments of Starsys Global Positioning, Inc. at 5.

inefficient way to utilize the limited time and resources available at WRC-95. More importantly, CMC believes that, in order to be in a position to address these issues at upcoming WRCs, the proper technical bases must first be established through the Radiocommunication Sector. Specifically, government and industry need to prioritize the issues and initiate and complete appropriate studies in the Radiocommunication Sector so that the technical support for any U.S. proposals is available before the Conference meets. Once this preparatory work is accomplished, the United States will be in a better position to determine which issues are ripe for consideration at WRC-95 or WRC-97.

III. Non-MSS Issues

As noted above, most of the comments filed in response to the Commission's NOI addressed MSS-related issues, while relatively few commenters discussed the Report of the VGE. CMC recognizes that many countries consider the VGE Report to be a priority, however we are concerned that including this item on the agenda for WRC-95 may strain the limited resources of the Conference and could result in there being insufficient time and attention dedicated to the pressing MSS issues discussed herein. Thus, CMC agrees with the view, discussed more fully in the Reply Comments of Comsat World Systems, that the VGE Report should be a lesser priority at WRC-95.[16]

[16] See Reply Comments of Comsat World Systems at 6.

We also note with interest ARINC's proposal that the Commission establish a permanent U.S. WRC working group to aid Commission staff in developing U.S. proposals for the WRC Conferences which will now be held every two years.[17] CMC shares ARINC's view that the process of preparing U.S positions for future WRCs would benefit from input provided by a permanent industry advisory committee, and CMC urges the Commission to consider the creation of such a group with representatives from the U.S. telecommunications industry as well as from the various U.S. government agencies.

IV. Conclusion

As CMC has discussed herein, the comments generally support a narrow agenda for WRC-95 focusing mainly on MSS issues. CMC urges the Commission to support the adoption of provisional arrangements at WRC-93 to allow coordination to begin immediately

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[17] See Comments of Aeronautical Radio, Inc. at 6-7. In CMC's view, ARINC's proposal reflects concern within the private sector regarding the current process by which the United States prepares its positions for WRC Conferences. ARINC's proposal is pertinent to the current preparation process for WRC-93. CMC notes that, in parallel with the Commission's NOI, NTIA is preparing for WRC-93 through the IRAC process to identify priorities of federal government users of the spectrum. The results of these separate FCC and NTIA processes are then coordinated to form the final U.S. proposals and positions. Given the short timeframe before WRC-93 in November, CMC is concerned that the private sector will not have adequate time to comment on agenda items identified in the IRAC process. Certain government proposals may impact the interests of the private sector. Therefore, we urge the Commission to provide as much time as possible for the private sector to comment on agenda items proposed by NTIA before the U.S. proposals are finalized and sent to Geneva.

in the 2 GHz MSS bands, and to support actively an agenda item for WRC-95 to advance the date for the availability of this spectrum to prior to the year 2000. In addition, CMC recommends that the United States initiate and support technical studies in the Radiocommunication Sector that will lay the groundwork for resolving technical and regulatory issues at WRC-95 associated with MSS feeder-links, as well as a variety of other MSS-related proposals. CMC stands ready to work with the Commission and other interested parties in developing appropriate technical contributions for submission to the Radiocommunication Sector.

Respectfully Submitted,

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